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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (5/07): PREDICTING THE NEXT 60 YEARS

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Main Stories:  
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"Israel is proposing a canton state," according to an unnamed Palestinian official on Al-Quds' front page. All dailies cover comments about negotiations by the PLO Executive Committee that, "the measurement of any progress in negotiations will be a halt to settlement activities." The Committee in its May 6 meeting, stressed the importance of unity between Gaza and the West Bank describing it as, "a basic national element that should not be given away." Related coverage on the front pages quote PLO negotiator Sa'eb Erakat stating that the, "Palestinian Authority leadership will study all possible options in the event that an agreement with Israel is not reached." Erakat adds that, "the news about American supervisors present at checkpoints is not accurate," coverage notes. On a positive note regarding the daily lives of Palestinians, the dailies highlight that Israeli authorities have published the names of 10,000 Palestinians that they have approved for legal residency in the Palestinian Territories.

The front pages of the three dailies focus on the status of investigations into corruption charges involving Israeli Premier Olmert. Al-Ayyam opens with, "Israel is preparing for what comes after Olmert and Barak hints at the possibility of early elections." Al-Quds reports that, "Olmert is on the edge of falling [from power]." All dailies report about the possibility that Israeli Foreign Minister Livni would head the government, should Olmert leave.

Palestinian Authority security forces in Jenin continue to be front page news in all papers. The dailies again highlight the determination of the Palestinian Authority to make the Jenin security mission a success, while noting that one Palestinian near

Jenin was injured by the security forces on May 6.

A Palestinian was killed in Gaza on May 6, following an Israeli airstrike, headlines reveal. The death of another Palestinian in an earlier airstrike, is the subject of an Al-Ayyam front page article. The daily runs a Reuters' story about the killing of a UN teacher who was "a vice principle in the morning and a bomb maker at night." Meanwhile, a report on the front page of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida headlines, "Israel found rockets and weapons in the Shufat refugee camp [in the Jerusalem area]."

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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1. Independent Al-Quds runs its daily editorial entitled "They are ignoring our catastrophe" (5/07): "... upon the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Israel, we should remember that negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis have reached a dead end. This is because of extensive settlement activities, the confiscation of land and the building of the wall [separation barrier]. [It is also because of Israeli efforts to] change the demography of Jerusalem and create realities on the ground in order to impose the Israeli vision of a solution regarding the future of the city. This goes hand in hand with the disregard for the rights of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims living [in Jerusalem]. All previous indicators show that the peace process is threatened and needs international intervention to stop these Israeli actions. These actions give the impression that the catastrophe of 1948 will continue..."

2. Official Al-Hayat Al-Jadida features veteran columnist Omar

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Al-Ghoul, opining under the title, "Why don't you lift the siege?" (5/07): "Two days ago, Hamas spokesperson, Sami Abu Zahri threatened during a press conference to end the siege [in Gaza] if Israel does not respond to their demands. This threat attracted the attention of local and international observers because it raises a central issue that Hamas has the ability to lift the siege on Gaza [demonstrated by the breach of the Egyptian border], and it holds the key to [such a possible] solution. Following the coup in Gaza in 2007, Hamas blamed the Palestinian Authority and Abbas for standing behind the Israeli Gaza siege policy... The Question is, if Hamas can lift the siege in Gaza, why doesn't it do it? What is Hamas waiting for?... national Palestinian interests require Hamas to back off from its policies and return to the options that people want [reconcile with the Palestinian Authority]."

WALLES